

Exhibit No. 3**VICTIM-WITNESS ASSISTANCE SERVICES**3-22-11

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Bill No.

HB 230**HB 230 – Senate Finance & Claims Hearing**

Good afternoon Chairman Lewis and members of the Committee. My name is Nichole Griffith and I am the Executive Director of the Victim-Witness Assistance Services in Great Falls. My agency currently receives funding from the Board of Crime Control through the Victims of Crime Act and the Sexual Assault Services Program and in the past has received Violence Against Women grant funds. We have received close to a million dollars since 1992.

We currently employ three advocates, including myself, that in the last six months of 2010 provided over 12,000 services to 874 victims. With only the three of us, we are able to provide 24-hour response to anyone in crisis or needing advocacy. The state does not provide money for these services. Without funds from the Board of Crime Control, my agency will not be able to respond to victims' emotional and physical needs by providing them with access to services and programs that help to stabilize their lives, thus providing a measure of safety and security.

Per the federal grant managers, if House Bill 230 is passed, the Board will have to close out all grants. This would mean no funds to my agency for anywhere between 2 months to a year. There is no doubt that I would have to lay employees off, and we would not have advocates to provide assistance to victims in the Great Falls community. Our agency provides services to approximately 250 crime victims at any given time, and I am unable to do this alone.

I ask that you vote no to House Bill 230 and avoid putting my program and others like mine in jeopardy.

Thank you.

Nichole Griffith

Victim-Witness Assistance Services

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